

Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library System Film/Video Department
Jamestown, New York

Pamela Susan Hawkins

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Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System *Videoscope*, 1977

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The Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library System's 3/4"-U-Matic video collection was developed by Jean Haynes. In October of 1966 Haynes moved from Brooklyn to Jamestown becoming their Film Librarian. Her interest in film began through reading Jonas Mekas' reviews in the Village Voice. The Library Services and Construct Act funded the Jamestown Library to collect 16mm films. In the mid 70's, through her contact with Howard Gutstadt's Survival Arts Media and readings on the portapack, Haynes started including independent video works in their collection. (4)

In 1984 NYSCA supported the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System to build a circulating video art collection for WNY.

"The Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library System's unique 3/4"-U-Matic video collection [was] available through interlibrary loan. Work of pioneer video artist, Nam June Paik, personal documentaries made with the Portapak, tapes by video collectives, representative video art and documentaries from the [first] two decades [were] all in this collection which was assembled with assistance from the New York State Council on the Arts. These tapes [were] used in classes, for library, museum, and other non-profit exhibitions, and for individual viewing." (1)

The collection was created to help teachers and directors of public access facilities find personal tapes and documentary models for their students, public access groups and ordinary camcorder operators. Also to help museums wishing to introduce video art to plan a series or explore a genre.... The tapes [could] be borrowed without charge..." (1) if there is no charge for admission but cable rights should be negotiated with the artist. (2)

In 1988 *Rural Images II*, a film and video festival sponsored by the Olean Public Library was programmed by Jean Haynes. This series has brought to the region film and video makers to present and discuss works. Haynes was also helpful in arranging tours by librarians to media facilities in Buffalo. Access to the Arts, directed by Kay Collins, is designed to appeal to general audiences with monthly programs. Access began to incorporate independent media titles.

Artists noted in a 1989 Sampler from the collection included: Nam June Paik; Ed Emshwiller; Ama L'Uomo Tuo; Director Howard Gutstadt's "The Artist's and Craftsmen's Anthology Series, A, B and C" on Chautauqua and Cattaraugus County artists and craftsmen; Director Arthur Ginsberg's "Carel and Ferd (A Video Soap); Daniel Reeves; Ilene Segalove; Bill Viola; Michael Marton; Julie Gustafson and John Reilly; Skip Sweeney; Fred Simon; Skip Blumberg; William Wegman; and Mitchell Kriegman. Also noted were Dierdre Boyle's 1986 Video Classics: A Guide to Video Art and Documentary Tapes, annotating 80 tapes by American videomakers and Jonathan Price's 1977 Video Visions: A Medium Discovers Itself about the history of video art and video makers. (1)

With the development of VHS video tape and players in the mid 80's, the 3/4" Umatic collection fell out of favor for use. It was decided in the early 90's to disperse the collection to individuals and institutions

who could make good use of the 3/4" Umatic tapes. Chris Hill, video curator at Hallwalls obtained the majority of the collection for their library. (4)

A 1997 Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library Video Collection listing of their 3/4" Umatic tapes which were forwarded to Hallwalls included works by: Louis Alvares; Ant Farm; Jules Bachus; Stephen Beck; Dara Birnbaum; Skip Blumberg; Peer Bode; Barbara Broughel; Barbara Buckner; Bullfrog Films, Inc.; Rochester Public Library's "Cablegram Program" excerpts; Doris Chase; Checkerboard Foundation Inc.; Laurie Cohen; Maxi Cohen; Community Cable Center; John C. Davis; DCTV; Emile De Antonio; Bob Deming; Cara Devito; Dimitri Devyatkin; Joe Dinki; The Documentary Guild; Ed Emschwiller; Joan Engle, Dan Feidt; Terry Fox; Esti Galili; Joan Gimmo; Arthur Ginsberg; Ernest Gusella; Howard Gutstadt; Julie Gustafson; Joanne M. Haumesser; Gary Hill; Edward B. Howard; Sally Kinsbury; Andy Kolker; KUTV, Salt Lake City; Phillip Mallory Jones, Gunilla Mallory; F.K. Keller; Jow Killsright; Mitchell Kriegman; Henry Coshey Linhart; Bill Marpet; Michael Marton; James Morris; George Neri; "New TV" curated by Maxi Cohen; Optic Nerve; Nam June Paik; Barbara Rafic; Carol Redmond; Dan Reeves; John Reilley; Ralph Robertson; Gerald Saldo; Irene Segalove; Jim Shokoff; Fred Frank Simon; Mark Stanley; Survival Arts Media; Elizabeth Sweetman; Perry Teasdale; Anita Thatcher; Twin Cities Public Television, Minnesota; Video Data Bank's "Hollis Frampton" interview; Videofreex, Video Repetorie LTD.; Bill Viola; William Wegman; Bill Hector Weye; Woodstock Archiving; Bruce and Norman Yonemoto. (3)

Today the Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library still holds a video collection of VHS tapes for lending locally.

1. Jean Haynes, Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library System U-Matic Video Collection: A Sampler, 1989.
2. Jean Haynes, letter, 1989.
3. Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library Video Collection, photocopy, July 1997.
4. Pamela Susan Hawkins phone conversation with Jean Haynes, August 29, 1998.

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

Excerpt from "Video and New York State Libraries" Videoscope 1977

"There are not that many diversified institutions dealing with culture here so libraries play a more significant role vis-a-vis the general level of culture than they would in a larger city. Libraries should let others 'Do TV' and work cooperatively with them."

Howard Gutstadt, Survival Arts Media

"I took a short course in videotape production because at the time I believed everything I heard about video and I thought I better get a course in this thing before it gets charging up the road while I'm completely unprepared. "

Jean Haynes, Film Librarian, Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library System

Expertise in videotape production does not develop overnight, even though 1 /2-inch portapak equipment is relatively easy to handle. How does a library meet its expectations for excellence in community video production and programming while still learning video skills? The ChautauquaCattaraugus Library System in Jamestown, New York has found a solution in the nurturing of a cooperative and productive relationship with two NYSCA artists-in-residence: Howard Gutstadt and Mollie Hughes of Survival Arts Media. Expatriates of New York City, SAM arrived in Jamestown in early summer, 1975 and presented some of their tapes in the Art Gallery at the James Prendergast Library. They discussed their ideas for expanding local video productions with the county library system: 1) extending their sophisticated video skills to and through the library; 2) having a visiting artists program to legitimize creative visual arts in the area; and 3) producing local arts programming of interest to both counties. Prior to their arrival, Jean

Haynes had purchased a portapak unit (8400) under the guidelines of the Adult Independent Learner Program to develop training workshops and role-playing sessions for the library staff. Community programming was not emphasized, but the Library did loan equipment to organizations and agencies such as New Economic Process and Manpower for their training workshops. SAM revived "community" enthusiasm that summer by providing workshops for library staff members which resulted in numerous single camera, unedited productions (story hours, craft fairs and a rodeo). While these tapes provide exciting feedback to the community, they are not well planned, according to Gutstadt, because library people underestimate the time commitment involved in producing a well-planned videotape. As a result, SAM has arranged with the library System to provide postproduction assistance (using its own and the library's 8650 editing decks) for any person associated through a library, producing a library program.

Ms. Haynes has made time available for her staff to learn video production seriously; Ann Garfinkle goes to the SAM studio two mornings a week to develop editing skills. Howie hopes to train library people to the point where they will have enough expertise to, in turn, train other staff members and volunteers.

In the meantime, the library System has taken on a new role as cooperative producer with SAM and the Lake Shore Association for the Arts, Inc. for a series of videotapes concerning the lifestyles and, work of Chautauqua/Cattaraugus County area creative people entitled, "The Artists and Craftsmen Anthology." Their first tape, Dennis Dorogi, Dulcimer Maker (shown last summer at the American Library Association Convention) is a pleasant trip through the process of one creative worker's efforts. These video productions will comprise a growing collection of television programs which would be available for viewing within the library system and potentially on cable and BOCES broadcast systems serving the two-county area. The BOCES system of transmitting towers is the most important distribution system around there; it enables more rural communities to receive educational programming feeds from major city sources, going directly into schools and homes over UHF channels.

The "Anthology" is an initial effort to build a cooperative relationship between all the arts organizations and institutions with television production and distribution capability. "When you're working with systems or institutions," says Gutsadt, "you have to develop mechanisms that are meaningful for, them to work with, like training staff on different levels. It takes two to three years to develop any kind of meaningful interactions, to create a willingness for everyone to work together" on production, programming and distribution efforts.

In addition to video workshops and productions, SAM and the Library also co-sponsored a short visiting artist series designed to open up the community to the variety of areas in which visual artists are creating. The series, funded by a technical assistance grant from NYSCA, was designed to begin at the "simple-structured TV idea like Lanesville Community TV" and progressing to more sophisticated technologies like Walter Wright's Computer Graphics. Other participating artists were Bill Jungles (film, video & photography); Ralph Jones (sound synthesis & video); Jane Aaron (animated film); Ernest Gusella (performance video); and Carl Geiger (video and computer systems). Nancy Cain and Bart Friedman of Media Bus, Lanesville, also participated in a discussion with library staff, BOCES and area cable stations about the possibilities of running a local community TV channel in the two counties. Gutstadt said, "There's value in encouraging this exposure [of artists] through the library system, and beyond-through BOCES-to reach more people."

What direction will they seek in the future? They would like to expand the visiting artist series to spotlight an artist-a-month for more in-depth exposure to the community, and to develop a video-cassette library and video gallery. Perhaps they can interest the countywide arts council in promoting a Film and Video Festival, "once there is a local television station and the possibility of broadcasting our own and other local work." It seems that for this corner of New York State, cooperation is definitely the key for the growth of video in the library world.